

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR THE FRESNO ASTHMATIC CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENT STUDY (FACES)

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Background and Aims: Communities are often disappointed in their participation in research studies, sometimes because researchers do not report the results to the community or provide assistance with application of the results to improve the well being of the community. A sense that researchers are indifferent to the community may lead to an unwillingness to participate in future research studies. This communication plan had aimed to assess the communication needs; to establish regular communication; and to communicate results to participants and to stakeholders.

Methods: Communication needs of FACES participants were assessed by a telephone survey of 50 participants. An invitation to participate in an online survey was emailed to 28 relevant organizations and 23 stakeholders from various community, non-governmental, and governmental organizations completed the survey.

Results: The results of interviews and surveys with key stakeholders were used to refine and revise the methods of providing feedback to participants and stakeholders. Regular communication was established with newsletters and fact sheets mailed to participants and a website; these included asthma related news and, later, aggregate study results. Individual results initially provided to participants ceased based on participant feedback. Key project results were communicated via three stakeholder meetings with planners, the Asthma Coalition, and the Fresno Medical Association; information packets were sent to school stakeholders.

Conclusions: This communications plan connected our research team with the participant and stakeholder community, fostered relationships and the collaborations have facilitated participant and community trust and satisfaction with the study, in addition to increasing dissemination of study results.